

All the survivors of World War I are now gone and only the archives remain. Without these direct witnesses of World War I, new generations largely learn about trench warfare in Europe, poison gas, and the introduction of tanks and airplanes. Where there is a plethora of writing about the combat of World War I, what often goes unnoticed is the experience of those who did not travel to Europe to fight in the Great War. Prior to the war, America was deeply divided over entering the war with positions seeming to change daily. President Woodrow Wilson ran his 1916 campaign with the slogan, “He Kept Us Out of War” only to ask Congress for a declaration of war five months later.¹

Once America was dedicated to fighting this global campaign, a sense of patriotic duty flooded the nation as soldiers signed up or were drafted into an unprepared army. Those men too old, physically incapable, religious objectors, and those unwilling to fight remained and had to justify to their communities why they were not going “Over There”. These justifications varied from patriotic pride to selfish ambition. The senior members of society who were too old to fight brought the war home to their communities by rooting out dissent and making daily life a fight against the Central Powers through war production.

Kern County, California was no exception to the mantra of supporting the war effort as a sign of one’s patriotic fervor. The Kern County Council of Defense was founded in April of 1917 to lead the great patriotic effort to support the war. Composed of influential local men and one woman, the Council of Defense was tasked with supporting the war effort by protecting the local communities, increasing production, conserving resources, and training civilians for military service. They discussed closing saloons, venereal disease reports, food conservation, persecuting pro-German support, and farm labor shortages. The contrast of this past era to

¹ David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: the First World War and American Society*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 12.

modern America provides many insights on how much change has occurred in a century. In 2018 America has been at war for nearly seventeen years, but the impact on daily life in Kern County is minimal. What has changed in the last 100 years from a society that was fully dedicated to a community war effort to a society where the war is often forgotten?

California State Council of Defense

In August 1916, Congress created the Council of National Defense with the aim to coordinate industry and resources in a time of war.² The national council consisted of the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Labor, and a President-appointed advisory committee of knowledgeable industry leaders.³ The Council of National Defense was to establish state councils of defense to further assist in the task of preparing and executing the war effort on the home front.

The California State Council of Defense was created on April 29, 1916 by authority of the state legislature with the goals of protecting routes of communication, protecting public health, caring for the families for deployed soldiers, increasing production for materials needed for war, conserving resources, and to train citizens for military service.⁴ Governor William Stephens announced the names of the 33 members of the State Council of Defense on April 5, 1917 and the group had its first meeting on April 6. The State Council of Defense quickly established the formation of county councils of defense to be direct representatives of the state

² Austin L Venable, "The Arkansas Council of Defense in the First World War," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1943): 116-26. doi:10.2307/40030585.

³ *War and National Defense*, U.S. Code 50, § 1. <https://codes.findlaw.com/us/title-50-war-and-national-defense/> (accessed online November 4, 2018).

⁴ A.H. Naftzger, *Report of the activities of the California State Council of Defense from April 6, 1917, to January 1, 1918*, (California State Printing Office, 1918), 5, <https://archive.org/details/reportofactiviti00cali/page/n7> (accessed November 4, 2018).

council and exercise supervision and authority in all forms of county defense work.⁵ The county councils were to be chaired by the presiding judge of the superior court and have members comprised of the district attorney, the sheriff, the chairman of the board of supervisors, the chairman of the county women's committee of the national state council of defense, the county clerk, the farm advisor, and the county horticultural commissioner.

The War Comes to Kern County

The European crisis was a consistent topic covered in the local newspapers before Congress officially declared war on April 6, 1917.⁶ *The Bakersfield Californian* and *The Morning Echo*'s front pages always posted war news and the debate leading up to President Woodrow Wilson's signing of the war resolution. As the resolution drew nearer to passage and a presidential signature, the local population began gearing up for war in numerous ways. On the night of Wednesday, April 4, a large gathering of Civil War and Spanish-American war veterans met to pledge their support of the war effort by forming a local home guard to protect the oilfields of Kern County.⁷ The chairman of this effort was Frank Munzer, the Superintendent for the Kern County Land Company and a very active participant in Bakersfield politics. Local women organized a meeting to form a Red Cross chapter in Bakersfield on the night of Thursday, April 5.⁸ The announcement praised the efforts of the Red Cross in supporting the

⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁶ "U. S. FORMALLY ENTERS WAR AGAINST GERMANY," *The Morning Echo*, April 6, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/04-06> (accessed November 3, 2018).

⁷ HOME GUARD OF 200 TO BE ORGANIZED AT MEETING," *The Bakersfield Californian*, April 5, 1917, 2, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/04-05/page-2> (accessed November 3, 2018).

⁸ "BAKERSFIELD RED CROSS BRANCH TO BE FORMED THURS.," *The Morning Echo*, April 4, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/04-04> (accessed November 2, 2018).

soldiers during the Spanish-American War nineteen years earlier and implied these efforts would be needed again soon.

The calling forth of the Bakersfield home guard was postponed as national plans to encourage home guard participation was set for April 19; the anniversary of the start of the American Revolutionary War at the Battles of Lexington and Concord. However, that did not stop the citizens of Taft from holding a rally with 2,500 attendees on Sunday April 8. Mayor Harry Hopkins called for the creation of a home guard to protect the oilfields from German spies and sabotage and the creation of a Red Cross chapter. The rally displayed patriotic signs and American flags as the crowd was whipped into a patriotic frenzy anytime President Wilson's name was mentioned.⁹ Even *The Morning Echo* showed its patriotic pride with an article in its Friday, April 6 edition titled "GET OUT YOUR FLAGS IF YOU HAVENT ONE BUY ONE AND SHOW IT". The article called for the Stars and Stripes to be displayed from every flagstaff and in order to recognize the Congressional approval of war, flags, emblems and bunting should be displayed everywhere.¹⁰ The next day *The Morning Echo* replaced their article with a front-page graphic of a flying flag that said, "HANG OUT THE FLAG. If You Have an American Flag Hang It Out! If You Haven't, GET ONE!"

A similar patriotic fever enveloped Kern County after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Flags were instantly brought out of closets and sold out in stores and displayed at homes, business, and on cars all across the county. Local citizens volunteered for military service. Yet, there was no Council of Defense, no draft, and no push to create similar measures.

⁹ "HOME GUARD AND RED CROSS PLANNED AT TAFT," *The Bakersfield Californian*, April 9, 1917, 2, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/04-09/page-2> (accessed November 3, 2018).

¹⁰ "GET OUT YOUR FLAGS IF YOU HAVENT ONE BUY ONE AND SHOW IT", *The Morning Echo*, April 6, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/04-06> (accessed November 3, 2018).

When the War in Afghanistan started on October 7, 2001, local families with service members were certainly concerned, but daily life continued on for the vast majority of residents. The nature of warfare had changed. Nationwide mobilizations were no longer necessary for an efficient and effective volunteer army. Military members had all of their immediate physical and tactical needs provided and the constant training to perform their war tasks. The invasion of Afghanistan initially involved less than 1,000 United States soldiers, mainly special operations and Green Berets.¹¹ By the end of 2002, less than 10,000 soldiers were deployed to Afghanistan, the peak of troop deployment was just over 100,000 soldiers in 2011, and less than 10,000 today. The requirements for total war were no longer necessary.

Kern County Council of Defense

According to newspaper accounts, the Kern County Council of Defense did not form until Wednesday, April 24, 1917 (meeting minutes are not in county archives until the August 27, 1917 meeting). In accordance with the State Council of Defense directives, the founding members were Superior Court Judge and Chairman Milton Farmer, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors H.I. Tupman, Sheriff D.B. Newell, District Attorney J.R. Dorsey, Horticultural Commissioner Kent Knowlton, Frank Munzer, and Arthur Swain.¹² Judge Famer stated that the primary purpose of the Council of Defense was to ensure the peace and order of the county in order to prevent riots and the destruction of important infrastructure like power and water plants, irrigation projects, oil properties, railroads, and bridges. Sheriff Newell reported that in the three weeks since the start of the war the private oil companies had employed 120 guards to protect the

¹¹ Associated Press, "A Timeline of U.S. Troop Levels in Afghanistan since 2001," *Military Times*, August 08, 2017, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2016/07/06/a-timeline-of-u-s-troop-levels-in-afghanistan-since-2001/> (accessed November 4, 2018).

¹² "COUNTY COUNCIL OF DEFENSE FORMED HERE TODAY," *The Bakersfield Californian*, April 25, 1917, 4, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvs.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/04-25/page-4> (accessed November 4, 2018).

oilfields of Kern County and all entries into Kern County were being protected by National Guardsmen. Under the supervision of Tupman, Swain, and Knowlton, the Council of Defense would increase food production and reduce waste. Munzer would direct the operations of the Red Cross and Home Guards.

An additional 13 associate members were appointed to the Kern County Council of Defense on Monday May 7, 1917. These members were largely the mayors of the outlying cities of Kern County and were tasked with conserving the food supply, increasing production, protecting grain from fire, and preserving peace and order.¹³ During the same meeting Commissioner Knowlton urged caution in protecting against grain fires, the creation of a list of enlisted soldiers be created in case the need to care of dependent families became necessary, and food conservation should be taught in the local schools.

On Wednesday, May 30, 1917, Chairman Farmer issued a statement clarifying the beneficiaries of war bonds. He was very clear about his views on the procurement of war bonds for the “last great war in behalf of democracy” went solely to the government and not to private banks.¹⁴ He reasoned that anyone who refused to subscribe to the loan was denying their American citizenship unless it was due to financial hardship. He concluded that there were no exemptions from this service and participating was the safest and best investment in the world today.

The Kern County Council of Defense had a hand in helping to organize a large draft registration drive on June 5. This event included a parade, the closing of local business, and the

¹³ “13 MEN ADDED TO COUNTY COUNCIL OF DEFENSE,” *The Bakersfield Californian*, May 8, 1917, 7, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvs.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/05-08/page-7> (accessed November 4, 2018).

¹⁴ “PEOPLE AND NOT BANKS LIABLE FOR WAR BONDS,” *The Bakersfield Californian*, May 30, 1917, 5, <https://access-newspaperarchivecom.ke.ezproxy.sjvs.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/05-30/page-5> (accessed November 4, 2018).

organization of 70 vehicles to help carry the registration papers from around the county back to the County Clerk's office.¹⁵ Once the registrations had been gathered, the State Council of Defense instructed the Kern County Council of Defense to split the county in half and create two districts to utilize draft exemption boards. On Monday, June 11, 1917, the council met and selected three exemption committee members from each district and announced them to the public. The dates of draft selection and exemption arguments were not set at the time.¹⁶

The women of Kern County also formed a woman's committee of the Councils of National and State Defense at a Saturday, June 30, 1917, meeting at the Woman's Club Hall in Bakersfield. Taftian L.P. Guiberson was selected as the chairwoman and the group called on all women of Kern County to register for conservation of foodstuffs on July 9. Judge Farmer was a speaker at the meeting and urged the women to conduct a 15-day campaign to support the food administration and register women for domestic service to the war effort. Mrs. Howard A. Peairs also spoke and reiterated how women could support the war effort with traditional tasks in addition to simplicity of dress, food, and entertainment for conservation.¹⁷

The Kern County Council of Defense's task of protecting the county from spies was taken seriously, even if most reports ended up being false alarms. In July 1917, local attorney Fred Borton was on a family picnic in the Tejon Ranch area when he saw a suspicious man making signals. Not long after and in the same area a cowpuncher reported he had a man draw a

¹⁵ "KERN READY TO REGISTER MEN FOR DRAFT TOMORROW," *The Bakersfield Californian*, June 4, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/06-04> (accessed November 4, 2018).

¹⁶ "MEMBERS OF EXEMPTION BOARDS NAMED," *The Bakersfield Californian*, June 11, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/06-11> (accessed November 4, 2018).

¹⁷ "KERN COUNTY WOMEN TO REGISTER FOR CONSERVATION OF FOODSTUFFS JULY 9," *The Bakersfield Californian*, July 2, 1917, 7, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/07-02/page-7/> (accessed November 4, 2018).

revolver on him. The Council of Defense was informed and Sheriff Newell assembled a posse to go investigate. The posse found two men who claimed they were doing government survey work, but without credentials, were detained and brought to jail for questioning. They turned out to be University of California students doing geological work on their summer vacation. In another instance during this time a woman reported to German spies found in East Bakersfield. Upon investigation they were found to be two Germans who were speaking broken English that had been living in Kern County for four years and were not a threat to the community.¹⁸

These initial measures taken by the Kern County Council of Defense were not drastically different than one might expect today. The Council was formed within the dictates of state law and without much deviation from standard practice. The Council of Defense served an important function in the local draft effort in order to keep the draft personal and exemptions would see more justified being approved and denied by local citizens. Local concerns about subversive attacks were evident during the 1991 Gulf War as oil companies tightened up security and fencing around their leases and national infrastructure was more heavily guarded after the September 11 attacks.

The primary differences in these early measures would be the separation of a woman's war effort and the existence of war funding. Having a separate women's Council of Defense that concentrated on domestic affairs would certainly be met with disdain today. Certainly, much has changed in the last century as woman's right to vote is recognized and gender roles are no longer aligned solely along traditional lines. A newspaper would never refer to a keynote speaker at the initial organizing meeting of the Women's Council of Defense as "Mrs. Howard A. Peairs" but would print her actual name and not the unnamed half of a marriage. Although women's

¹⁸ "GERMAN SPY RUMOR CAUSES OFFICERS TO INVESTIGATE," *The Bakersfield Californian*, July 17, 1917, 6, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/07-17/page-6> (accessed November 4, 2018).

organizations might exist to support or oppose a war today, they certainly would not be government-run and would not be limited to female participation. Judge Farmer's rather pointed comments about investing in war bonds would be inappropriate for a superior court judge today. The First Amendment is more respected than it was during the days of the Espionage and Sedition Acts and official government chastisement for supporting or opposing a war through heavy-handed economics would meet fairly stiff resistance. Also absent is the desire to fund wars through citizen investment. Instead, the United States Government seems content to simply borrow the money necessary to fight the war.

Kern County Council of Defense Minutes from 1917

No meeting minutes of the Kern County Council of Defense currently are known to exist prior to their August 27, 1917 meeting. This might be due in part to there not being a secretary of the group until Frank Smith was elected to the position at this meeting. Farm Advisor George Kreutzer had been added to the original group appointed in April and at this meeting, L.P. Guiberson was elected at the advice of the Governor to have at least one woman on the Council.¹⁹ The Council appointed H.I. Tupman as the chairman of a committee with C.V. Anderson and Frank Munzer to find men that were drafted in the National Army who have purchased property with payments still due and make arrangements to make sure those men do not lose their property while in service of the country. Another committee was formed of Mayor Taylor of Bakersfield, Mayor Hopkins of Taft, F.N. Scofield, W.W. Colm, and Kent Knowfield, chairman. This committee would make arrangements for ceremonies celebrating the departure of drafted men for the National Army and to assist the Exemption Boards in handling and caring for these men from the day of mobilization to their departure.

Frank Munzer moved to allow Secretary Smith the authority to communicate with local

¹⁹ Kern County Council of Defense Minutes, August 27, 1917, Kern County Museum Collection, 1.

officials about removing noxious weeds found along county highways and city streets. The local farmers had been doing their best to remove them from their property, so the group thought it was only right for local government to do its part.²⁰ The Council was concerned about the burning of oil in a sump in the Kern River Field and for conservation's sake, they would send Secretary Smith to investigate about placing a catch basin there instead. Frank Munzer asked for a resolution to be approved to form an active home guard organization throughout Kern County.

On Thursday, October 4, 1917, there was an informal meeting of the Council of Defense with Supervisor Tupman, Frank Smith, District Attorney Dorsey, Frank Munzer, Kent Knowlton and Sheriff Newell in attendance. They authorized a telegram to be sent to the proprietors of the saloons along the Southern Pacific railway outside of the incorporated cities to comply with the wishes of the War Department and close during the passage of troop trains through the towns of Mojave and Caliente. A Southern Pacific employee would notify them in advance of the time of arrival and the time of departure of each and every troop train. Letters were also sent to the cities of Bakersfield and Tehachapi with a copy of telegram to the unincorporated cities.²¹

The Morning Echo reported on the meeting and telegram on Friday, October 5 and added that no official action was taken, but that refusal to comply would be counted as a point against the offending establishments when they seek to renew their license with the Kern County Board of Supervisors.²² On Saturday morning, October 6, *The Morning Echo* had an article about A.J. Woody's refusal to close down his bar, the Metropole, upon request of the Bakersfield Police Department while a troop train was in town. The paper reported Woody responded to the request

²⁰ Ibid., 3.

²¹ Ibid., 4.

²² "NOTIFY SALOONS TO CLOSE WHEN TROOP TRAINS PASS THROUGH," *The Morning Echo*, October 5, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/10-05> (accessed November 4, 2018).

with “too busy making money with which to buy Liberty bonds!”²³ The police stated they would be making a report to the Council of Defense.

Another informal meeting was held on Tuesday, October 17, 1917, to recommend a chairman to the committee to handle the registration of food pledges²⁴. Judge Farmer recommended County Clerk Frank Smith to the position and authorized \$400 to be paid by the Council of Defense to make this happen.²⁵ Then on Thursday October 18 the Council met again to approve the county farm advisor and county horticultural commissioner to push the Second Liberty Loan Bonds with local farmers and the farmers’ bureaus. Further, they authorized the request to the Liberty Loan Committee to hold a public meeting on Liberty Loan Day on October 24th and offered the Council of Defense’s support.²⁶

The Council of Defense then passed a resolution for the Bakersfield City Council to pass an ordinance to require all liquor dealers in the City to close their places of business during the time troops trains pass through or are detained in Bakersfield. The next item was to urge the Bakersfield City Council to make it a misdemeanor for any liquor dealer to permit the sale of liquor to persons known to those liquor dealers to be drafted for military duty in the United States army.²⁷ The Council of Defense also requested the State Council of Defense change the political code to prevent the burning of election ballots and allow them to be marked anonymous and sold so paper could be conserved. The final business of the Council was to request that all

²³ “WOODY DIDN’T CLOSE BAR ON ARRIVAL OF TROOPS, POLICE SAY,” *The Bakersfield Echo*, October 6, 1917, 10, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/10-06/page-10/> (accessed November 4, 2018).

²⁴ October 17th was a Wednesday. *The Morning Echo* reported the letter on Thursday October 18 and referenced the event as “yesterday”. The minutes are likely supposed to read Wednesday October 17th, 1917.

²⁵ Kern County Council of Defense Minutes, October 17, 1917, Kern County Museum Collection, 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

citizens save papers to donate to the Red Cross Fund.²⁸

Clearly the Council of Defense had received the report about Woody's refusal to close down the Metropole and their October 18 minutes implied they were going to do something about it. On Monday, October 22 the Bakersfield City Council met and specifically discussed the recommended ordinances and the Metropole bar incident. Woody now claimed he did not know about the Council of Defense and that he hadn't realized why the police were asking him to close down.²⁹ After hearing from the police officers, Woody, and a declaration by Reverend A.L. Baker of the Methodist Church to punish Woody to dissuade further lawlessness, the City Council voted to delay action for one week.³⁰ On October 29, the City Council met and decided in a 4 to 3 vote to drop the case against Woody and the Metropole. City Councilman Earl Howard argued there was no ordinance in place at the time that Woody had violated. There was speculation that influential friends had interceded on Woody's behalf as the council went on to pass the misdemeanor ordinance for serving soldiers in the future.³¹

The Kern County Council of Defense's efforts against saloons would continue with a November 12, 1917 resolution asking for the suspension of all liquor licenses for the duration of the war at a meeting of the San Joaquin Valley Councils on Saturday November 17, 1917.³² The resolution claimed that the open saloon was a menace to the United States Government because

²⁸ Ibid., 8.

²⁹ "HOTEL MAN EXPRESSES HIS REGRET," *The Morning Echo*, October 23, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/10-21/page-15/> (accessed November 4, 2018).

³⁰ "ACTION ON METROPOLE BAR CASE PUT OVER ONE WEEK BY THE CITY COUNCIL," *The Bakersfield Californian*, October 23, 1917, 6, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/10-23/page-6> (accessed November 4, 2018).

³¹ "WOODY CASE DROPPED BY 4 TO 3 VOTE," *The Morning Echo*, October 30, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/10-30> (accessed November 4, 2018).

³² Kern County Council of Defense Minutes, November 12, 1917, Kern County Museum Collection, 9.

of the dangerous effect on the men in federal service and those about to be in federal service. It further claimed that alcohol incited men to deeds of violence or making statements that lead to violence. The resolution went on to say that the grains used to make liquor should be conserved for food and the labor shortage would be aided by reducing the manufacture of beer and liquors and the closing of saloons would encourage people not to loiter, but to get to work. The resolution points out the sacrifice made by our soldiers should be honored by our sacrifice of providing the best nutritive foods from the harvesting of crops. In conclusion, the resolution asks for the applications for all new liquor licenses or renewals be denied for the period of the war.

More details about the resolution were reported in the Tuesday, November 13 edition of *The Bakersfield Echo*. The proposal would close 15 saloons in the unincorporated cities with the last saloon closing on July 9, 1918. If the city were to support the resolution as well, all licenses would expire on December 31, 1917. Chairman Farmer deemed it unwise to press the resolution until it received support of the entire valley as he wanted to see all the momentum and prestige of the resolution make it effective.³³ County Clerk Frank Smith was reported to be a veteran of the Manila Campaign with Commodore Dewey and was the author of the resolution. H.I. Tupman acknowledged that the Council of Defense had no authority to enforce the resolution but could merely suggest it to the appropriate government agencies. An unnamed member of the Council of Defense was quoted as saying he supports it fully, but was suspicious the Bakersfield City Council would split over the issue as \$45,000 a year were generated from the liquor licenses. The resolution faced an uphill battle in Taft as well. The Grand Jury was also expected to file its annual report by A.H Swain which called for the support of the Council of Defense's resolution

³³ "WOULD CLOSE SALOONS IN KERN COUNTY TOWNS AND CITIES FOR PERIOD OF WAR," *he Morning Echo*, November 13, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/11-13/page-1> (accessed November 5, 2018).

against liquor.^{34 35}

The Kern County Council of Defense met again Wednesday, November 21, 1917, and reported that the San Joaquin Valley group had met and unanimously supported the denial of all new liquor licenses. As a result, the Kern County Council of Defense was issuing a new resolution that largely mimicked their resolution less than two weeks prior calling for the denial of all new liquor licenses and no more liquor license renewals after July 1, 1918.³⁶ Yet this new resolution went further and called on Congress and the President of the United States to take action to close the open saloon for the duration of the war. However, a roll call was taken and there was dissent. Farmer, Kreutzer, Guiberson, Smith, Swain, and Knowlton voted to approve the resolution while County Supervisor Tupman and Frank Munzer dissented without comment.

Frank Smith went on the record in the Thursday, November 22 *The Morning Echo* to reiterate the importance of ending the war quickly and that the open sale of liquor hurts our fighting forces overseas and at home. He called the resolution a practical and patriotic method to successfully campaign against a dangerous foe.³⁷ Supervisor Tupman stated he voted against it because the resolution had no weight coming from an “irresponsible body” and that Frank Munzer agreed. The Bakersfield City Council met on Monday, November 26 and unanimously passed a resolution without comment to defer action until the State or National Councils of Defense acted upon the matter. For the time being the City of Bakersfield would not be denying

³⁴ A.H. Swain’s title as Grand Jury Foreman has not been mentioned in the Kern County Council of Defense Minutes.

³⁵ “GRAND JURY TO FILE ITS REPORT,” *The Morning Echo*, November 13, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/11-13/page-1> (accessed November 5, 2018).

³⁶ Kern County Council of Defense Minutes, November 21, 1917, Kern County Museum Collection, 10.

³⁷ “CLOSE SALOONS IS DEFENSE REQUEST,” *The Morning Echo*, November 22, 1917, 8, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/11-22/page-8> (accessed November 5, 2018).

liquor licenses until urged to by a higher authority than the county level.³⁸ The County Board of Supervisors took up the issue at their Wednesday, December 5, 1917 meeting, but the dry vote failed 4-1.³⁹

With the Council of Defense's attempts to regulate alcohol a failure, they moved on to other business at their December 19, 1917 meeting. The Council set their meeting days to the second and fourth Mondays of each month starting in January, 1918.⁴⁰ The Retail Merchants Association requested the Council of Defense look into the idea of refusing to sell bread on wheatless days and meat on meatless days. The Council voted to have the chairman investigate the matter with the Federal Food Administration. The meeting was adjourned, but a special session called on Friday, December 28, 1917. The Council of Defense had met with local merchants and with their support then resolved to request that all bakers and retail dealers not to sell flour or wheat flour products on Wednesdays. Again, after meeting with local merchants, the Council ordered that all meat dealers decline to sell pork on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Sexism, Prohibition, and Production

The forced inclusion of a female member of the Kern County Council of Defense by the governor's office would certainly stand out in modern times. One would hope that should Councils of Defense be required again, that some members would naturally be women without having to have a higher authority remind the men to include women. The current Kern County District Attorney Lisa Green and Board of Supervisor Leticia Perez would indicate women

³⁸ "COUNCIL to AWAIT ACTION OF STATE ON SALOONS," *The Bakersfield Californian*, November 27, 1917, 6, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1917/11-27/page-6> (accessed November 5, 2018).

³⁹ "SUPERVISORS REJECT NATION DRY RESOLUTION," *The Morning Echo*, December 6, 1917, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1917/12-06/> (accessed November 5, 2018).

⁴⁰ Kern County Council of Defense Minutes, December 19, 1917, Kern County Museum Collection, 12.

would likely be on the committee not as a token presence, but as a fundamentally integral foundation of the committee.

There are two modern considerations with regards to the Council of Defense's campaign against alcohol. First, shortly after The Great War was over, America participated in the "Noble Experiment" of Prohibition and as Frank Smith clearly wanted, banned alcohol in the United States with the 18th Amendment. After thirteen years of Prohibition, the 21st Amendment repealed the ban and alcohol once again was manufactured and served. The acceptance of alcohol has been cemented into American social life and is no longer such a concern. However, the second consideration is the idea that the government has the authority to reach so far into the private lives of its citizens. A.J. Woody responded like most modern proprietors would today that neither the police nor some council had the authority to limit his private business and efforts to make money due to the war effort. That is not to say that if some similar product becomes taboo during war time today the local patriotic consumers might not put significant pressure upon business owners to comply.

However, the pressure would be unlikely to come from the government of any level like it did in 1917. Woody had sensed that he had gone too far and there was just enough public condemnation placed upon the City Council to make him repentant and concerned about a real government threat to his business. He barely survived real City Council action in a close 4-3 vote, but he had sealed the fate of the rest of the bar owners of the City and they were prohibited from selling alcohol to any enlisted or drafted man. Today it would be highly unlikely that the Bakersfield City Council would pass such a measure to limit lawful business of a lawful product. Without question, prohibiting soldiers from being able to drink while allowing civilians would have the opposite effect today as not only soldiers, but civilians would likely offer considerable

opposition.

Alcohol has been banned for United States Military members serving overseas in Islamic countries. First in the 1990-1991 Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm⁴¹ and then in the countries of Iraq and Afghanistan⁴², United States soldiers have been prohibited from possessing or drinking alcohol. In a country where soldiers come from the citizenry and other coalition countries allow their soldiers to imbibe on deployment, how does the United States Military succeed in banning alcohol? First, the chain of command and hierarchical nature of the military does not allow for questioning orders from superiors. Soldiers accustomed to obeying orders will continue to largely obey orders without public complaint or find ways to violate those orders in a discreet manner. However, the real reason the military is able to ban alcohol on deployments is because the ban does not impact the civilian populations back home. As long as civilians do not have to sacrifice their liberties, they are willing to look the other way for soldiers of a volunteer army. And that is perhaps why the Council of Defense's efforts for an outright saloon ban failed. Despite Frank Smith's rhetoric about sacrifice and doing what is fair for our soldiers, citizens do not want their lives disrupted any further than necessary.

As covered earlier, the size of the current United States military is a small fraction of what it was during World War I which has made rationing of any products unnecessary in modern times. The calls to save grain by banning alcohol and wheatless and meatless days are not necessary in a modern capitalist market that produces much more than is necessary for domestic needs. World War I did not have official rationing like World War II and domestic

⁴¹ Mary Jordan, "TROOPS FACE A SOBERING RETURN TO REALITY," The Washington Post, April 02, 1991, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1991/04/02/troops-face-a-sobering-return-to-reality/4ac3b2c4-4b17-4f60-b1ed-f01d834a135b/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.0d0aa1703241 (accessed November 5, 2018).

⁴² "No Alcohol for Troops in Afghanistan," DeseretNews.com. March 17, 2012, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/765560581/No-alcohol-for-troops-in-Afghanistan.html> (accessed November 5, 2018).

producers were still able to ramp up production and supply the military. As the Allied propaganda machines often touted, the rationale for food conservation often fell upon the Belgians or the French as the people who would benefit from eliminating waste. Even World War II likely did not require rationing, but the authorities and the public participated in order to show some sacrifice to the soldiers serving overseas. The modern military often has no needs unfulfilled and bond drives are unnecessary when budgets are simply ballooned into massive deficits for the war effort.

Kern County Council of Defense in 1918

The Kern County Council of Defense had voted to have their meetings twice a month on the second and fourth Mondays, but there is a noticeable gap in their minutes from December 28, 1917 until the next meeting minutes on February 25, 1918. *The Morning Echo* reported on a meeting on Monday January 29, 1918 where the Council discussed a War Recreation Fund and taking care of soldiers on their return from camp. Judge Farmer pledged to help make the patriotic rally on February 11 the “biggest thing of its kind ever attempted in Kern County.”⁴³ The Council of Defense also pledged to help farmers grow more cotton in order to help the war effort and attract the establishment of a new cotton gin similar to what Fresno recently received. A special session was held on Monday February 25, 1918 to announce Kent Knowlton had enlisted in the service and that Norman Buhn was the new Horticultural Commissioner and it was approved that Buhn would serve on the Council of Defense in Knowlton’s position. There was some discussion about “the Farm Labor problem” and arrangements for a visit by the Governor, but those items were tabled until the next regular meeting.⁴⁴

⁴³ “COTTON GROWING IN KERN URGED BY DEFENSE COUNCIL,” *The Morning Echo*, January 29, 1918, 4, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1918/01-29/page-4> (accessed November 6, 2018).

The Kern County Council of Defense met again on Monday March 25, 1918 and their first order of business was to appoint a committee of five citizens to select community councils at the request of the Council of National Defense.⁴⁵ The Council next approved a three-person committee to pass upon and approve fundraising activities for “any purposes whatsoever”. An outside committee chaired by H.W. Thomas appeared before the Council of Defense to protest distinctly pro-German “actions and utterances”. This group vowed to use whatever means they considered necessary to “suppress every and anything that was in conflict with the successful prosecution of the War.”⁴⁶ The Council of Defense reminded them that the law permitted this to a “certain point, but not beyond it in assisting in the enforcing the State and National laws.” The Council pledged its full authority in the prosecution of those accused of pro-German statements or actions.

Reporting on this meeting *The Morning Echo* quoted Judge Farmer talking about the numerous stories and charges he has received about “acts of disloyalty”.⁴⁷ He praised the one agency doing all the investigations but suggested that all citizens should help when they can. Judge Farmer reported that high school superintendent Lawrence Chenoweth was able to stop a German private school in Shafter, but not through the weak laws, but from his suggestions and power of his office. “That is splendid work on the part of Mr. Chenoweth.” Mr. Farmer continued to suggest that if anyone heard a man make a pro-German utterance on the street, they should go to the District Attorney’s office and swear to a warrant for attempt to start a riot and

⁴⁴ Kern County Council of Defense Minutes, February 25, 1918, Kern County Museum Collection, 17.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁴⁷ “ORGANIZE WHOLE COUNTY INTO A DEFENSE COUNCIL,” *The Morning Echo*, March 26, 1918, 10, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-morning-echo/1918/03-26/page-10> (accessed November 6, 2018).

that person would be prosecuted. Judge Farmer had no doubt a jury will convict that person upon presentation of the evidence.

On Wednesday April 24, 1918, the Kern County Grand Jury filed its report. They once again recommended that all liquor licenses be cancelled immediately for the duration of the war. They went further to say, “If any of the governing bodies disloyalty refuse this patriotic duty we then recommend the early calling of special wet and dry elections in the whole county.”⁴⁸ The Grand Jury continued with, “Moral conditions in Kern county are rotten, so bad that knowledge of them has reached the war department through statistics showing the enormous percentage of Kern county boys infected with venereal disease as compared with the boys from other counties in the different states.”⁴⁹

The Kern County Council of Defense called a meeting on Saturday April 27, 1918, and approved Norman Buhn to chair a committee to procure and distribute farm labor and designate committees to assist throughout the county.⁵⁰ The Council also referred a resolution from the Farm Bureau to close all saloons for the duration to the war to a committee of F.E. Mannel and A.H. Swain.⁵¹ However, the Council of Defense had a contentious discussion regarding the Grand Jury’s report of venereal disease from earlier in the week. Frank Munzer introduced a lengthy resolution that outlined how patriotic Kern County has been and despite that the Grand Jury’s statement was an “unwarranted insult and injury” and an “unmerited slur upon the people

⁴⁸ “Grand Jury Files Its Report and Adjourns,” *The Bakersfield Californian*, 7, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1918/04-24/page-7> (accessed November 6, 2018).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Kern County Council of Defense Minutes, February 25, 1918, Kern County Museum Collection, 18.

⁵¹ Ibid., 22.

of Kern County and the boys who have gone from Kern County into their Country's service."⁵² The resolution continued to criticize the public's lack of knowledge of the Grand Jury and the Grand Jury's lack of authority to comment on public matters. The resolution concluded by "condemning without reservation as a wholly baseless insult to a patriotic people" and the Grand Jury is called upon to either produce the statistics backing up their claim or publicly retract and withdraw the statement in their report.⁵³ Chairman Farmer believed that some of the criticism of the Grand Jury was outside of the scope of the Council of Defense and asked that some of the resolution be amended. Munzer refused and called for the vote. The resolution passed with Munzer, Tupman, Swain, Guibeerson, Buhn, Rice, and Newell approving and Farmer and Smith voting no.

The public outrage intensified over the next few days and weeks and came to a head when the Grand Jury filed a second report on May 17, 1918. The Grand Jury criticized people for warping their report and trying to ignore the "true local situation." The Grand Jury reported that the people were inflamed and violence was committed and threatened violence upon lives and property. The Grand Jury was not condemning "our soldier boys", but simply reporting the facts. Judge Farmer issued a rebuttal that noted the Grand Jury still had not produced evidence or statistics of their facts but was willing to let the matter rest as he supported the Grand Jury's contention that vice had to be dealt with in Kern County through the suppression of prostitution.⁵⁴

The minutes for the Council of Defense have no more entries for nearly three months

⁵² Ibid., 19.

⁵³ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁴ "Grand Jury Files a Second Report and Quotes Army Officer," *The Bakersfield Californian*, May 18, 1918, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvls.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1918/05-18> (accessed November 6, 2018).

until Judge Farmer resigned as a superior court judge and on July 3, 1918, the Council appointed Superior Court Judge J.W. Mahon as the new chairman. However, the Council of Defense wanted the appointment to be cleared by the State Council of Defense and Governor Stephens first, so J.R. Dorsey was elected as the acting chairman until further notice.⁵⁵ The archives include a letter from the Governor's executive secretary from July 10, 1918, that specifies in the case of there being no presiding judge of the superior court, it was up to the local council to decide which judge they would like to choose as chairman and the governor would leave the matter to the local council.⁵⁶ On July 24 the Kern County Council of Defense met again and elected Frank Munzer as the Chairman Pro-tem and then referencing the letter from the Governor's office, elected Judge Mahon to be the Chairman of the Kern County Council of Defense.⁵⁷

The next minutes are from the meeting on Monday September 2, 1918 and was reported to be attended by 114 people. The first item on the agenda was a report that the Southern Pacific Shops had flown an Italian flag without an accompanying elevated American flag. The Council took action on the issue.⁵⁸ The large group present requested that the Council of Defense protect against hay and grain fires. The Council agreed to ask the State Council of Defense to locate and arrest "the men responsible for these dastardly deeds." A resolution was approved to retain the members Frank Smith, D.B. Newell, and Jesse Dorsey despite the State Council of Defense request they step down during their reelection campaigns. The resolution specified that the three had already been "re-elected to their respective offices by overwhelming majorities" and their

⁵⁵ Kern County Council of Defense Minutes, July 3, 1918, Kern County Museum Collection, 23-24.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 27.

work and importance to the council to date was too valuable to lose.⁵⁹ A brief meeting was called on September 19 to hear statements from local warehouseman about their efforts to protect their stores from fire and to approve a committee to investigate the efforts of those not present in protecting their grains.⁶⁰

The archives are missing minutes from a meeting reported in *The Bakersfield Californian* from Wednesday September 18, 1918. The Kern County Committee of One Hundred wanted to assure that crops, warehouses, and foodstuffs were being properly guarded. Representatives from local warehouses were present and stated that their facilities were already under armed guard and fire was unlikely. The Council appointed captains and lieutenants for the four districts and required them to submit weekly reports to Chairman Mahon who would forward them to the State Council. The Council also approved the formation of a “flying squadron” of ten local citizens who owned automobiles to answer calls to each district in case of trouble or fires. The members of the flying squadron would be deputized by the sheriff. The State Council issued a report to Chairman Mahon to establish a direct telephone line with a special number, like 00, to directly phone the flying squadron headquarters to report fires or plots against foodstuffs. It was reported this meeting was attended by over 100 people for nearly two hours.⁶¹

The Council met on Monday September 30, 1917 to discuss stores closing at 6 o’clock and being closed all day Sunday. There had been complaints by citizens to the State Council of Defense about this inconvenience, but the Kern County Council of Defense had asked around and most businesses were complying. With that, the Council voted to approve a notice to be sent

⁵⁹ Ibid., 28.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 29.

⁶¹ “COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED TO PROTECT WAREHOUSES,” *The Bakersfield Californian*, September 18, 1918, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.ke.ezproxy.sjvs.org/us/california/bakersfield/bakersfield-californian/1918/09-18> (accessed November 7, 2018).

to businesses to close at 6 o'clock.⁶² The State Council of Defense had inquired about home grocery deliveries and what days they were being made. The Council agreed there should only be one delivery per day and that they would defer to the Price Interpretation Committee for their guidance on when that should be.⁶³ The State Council of Defense had requested information about irrigation water being wasted. Frank Munzer and 17 canal corporations stated it was not being wasted, but a committee was formed to investigate and report back as soon as possible. And finally, Chairman Mahon asked the Committee of 100 to form the county into divisions for the purpose of combating fires, quelling disturbances, and performing such other police duties as is required of them by the Council. Seven ward captains were suggested and the members of the "Flying Squadron" were announced before adjournment.

On Friday October 4, 1918, the Council of Defense met and reported the Price Interpretation Committee recommended just one grocery delivery a day and that all orders received after 9:30 AM be delivered the following day. Judge Mahon suggested to the Council that cigar stands, ice-cream parlors, butcher shops and all other business which had not been ordered closed at 6 o'clock weekdays and all day on Sunday now be closed. This was approved to be forwarded to the State Council of Defense for suggestion.⁶⁴ Frank Smith moved to rescind the order to close "grocery stores, bakeries, etc." at 6 o'clock and on Sundays until the State Council of Defense responded to the closing of the mercantile establishments at 6 o'clock and it was approved.

The Council met on Wednesday October 16, 1918, to appoint M.A. Rice, Farm Advisor, to the Kern County Council and J.A. Hughes was appointed as the Chairman of the War

⁶² Kern County Council of Defense Minutes, September 30, 1918, Kern County Museum Collection., 30.

⁶³ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 33.

Donation Bureau by the State Council of Defense. The State Council of Defense also informed Judge Mahon that by virtue of his chairmanship he is also a member of every committee of the Council.⁶⁵ The State Council of Defense wanted a more uniform system and requested the Kern County Council of Defense meet on the first and third Wednesdays which the Council approved. Various reports were read by the varying committees before Judge Mahon requested a committee talk to “the doctors” before reporting back as soon as possible on the Spanish Influenza epidemic. The Council then moved to close all public gathers in Kern County until the Spanish Influenza was over.⁶⁶

Community Support, Dissent, and the First Amendment

Many of the Kern County Council of Defense’s actions were not much different than a chamber of commerce, service organization, or local government might perform to support soldiers and the economy today. War recreation funds, helping organize patriotic rallies, advertising war bonds, creating fundraising activities, and helping establish an early 911-style phone system are all activities that would be expected of similar organizations today without much opposition from the public. Even taking a stance against a controversial report about venereal disease would not arouse public opposition or calls that the issue was beyond a similarly composed organization today.

Yet there are distinct issues the Council of Defense addressed that would be staunchly opposed today. The outside group that vowed to suppress any pro-German utterances or anti-war sentiments would likely not find an audience with a quasi-government or government agency today. First Amendment protections have been strengthened in the post-World War II era and

⁶⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 37.

any attempts by these agencies to suppress dissenting speech would be challenged in court and would likely be struck down by the Supreme Court. And the Council did not stop there. Judge Farmer is quoted in the newspaper as telling citizens to report anyone making pro-German utterances so they could have a warrant issued, the person arrested, and a jury would convict them of attempting to start a riot. In the same article he praised the superintendent of schools for using his influence to stop a German school from opening. Even as conservative as Kern County remains today, there would be public backlash if these things were attempted against minority groups today.

Frank Munzer's crusade against the Grand Jury is still likely possible today given the right topic. The Grand Jury even used more patriotic language than Munzer in their call to stop issuing liquor licenses for the duration of the war which should make the two natural allies. However, the Grand Jury, in its attack on moral vice, made the mistake of implying the "boys"⁶⁷ from Kern County that were entering the army had venereal disease. Instead of supporting the Grand Jury in their quest to clean up the county, Munzer was incensed and attacked them for uttering such blasphemy against the good citizens of Kern County. In the era of social media, these types of moral crusades and campaigns of moral outrage are easy to start and spread. They are often over the most mundane topics, but are spread to imply greater malfeasance of society in general. Although there might have been some documented evidence of higher rates of venereal disease coming out of Kern County, the Grand Jury might not have wanted to even find the evidence to support their case and instead simply let the issue die as they were likely perplexed why Munzer took such offense to the statement and so quickly equated the Grand Jury's attack on prostitution as an attack on the soldiers from Kern County. Once the offended group is scorned, there is no amount of justification or evidence that can stop their relentless attacks.

⁶⁷ Soldiers.

The Council addressed flag etiquette from reports of the allied Italian flag flying without an accompanying, more elevated American flag along with it. This issue of private individuals or businesses would not be addressed by a government agency today. However, it could be debatable whether this is no longer an issue due to First Amendment cases protecting such activities like burning the American flag or due to a general ignorance towards flag etiquette and a general lack of patriotism from many Americans. Only in rare cases would private individuals be called to task like this, but it would more likely be from friends or patrons and not likely to be addressed by an official government body.

Towards the end of the war, the Council inserted themselves into what today would seem like the most trivial attempts to regulate commerce for the war effort. Attempting to regulate the frequency of home delivery, concerns about irrigation canal wastage, and mandating business closures at certain times of the day and week were unlikely to offer many conservation benefits. The United States was never in serious jeopardy of running short on anything during the war and even if they were, the savings from these acts were minimal. The energy saved in closing business early would just transfer to the business owners and patrons being home using the same energy or more as they were now spread out of an entire town instead of in certain businesses. Canal operators already had a vested interest in conserving water as water was their sellable resource. What the Council was suffering was its own shortage of issues to control the public over. What public figures wanted was to exert even more power than they normally did and dictating how often someone could make deliveries or when your business was open displayed that power. The only time the Council seemed hesitant to wield that power was in October 1918 to keep the grocery stores and bakeries open and that was likely because it was becoming too much of a hassle for their own lives.

Conclusion

The Kern County Council of Defense during World War I was composed of a patriotic group of local leaders who attempted to keep the county focused on supporting and winning the war. They used a variety of tactics and methods that in today's modern society would be viewed as unnecessary and even hostile to the rights and values that Americans hold in much higher regard today. Today, America has been locked in a 17-year war in Afghanistan and yet most Americans seem to be largely immune to its effects. The scale of World War I in both military and commercial needs necessitated a much stronger response from the nation as a whole compared to the much smaller campaign in Afghanistan. And society has changed with a greater respect for freedom and diversity that was repressed and actively punished during World War I. The history of the Kern County Council of Defense offers a contrasting view that the current generations of Americans can read and appreciate how far this country has truly advanced.

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